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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the kinds of information and guidance that social scientists have contributed to school desegregation efforts and discusses some of the problems that remain to be overcome if desegregation is to be equitable. It is argued that research on desegregation has failed to address the important issues and that quantitative, panoramic studies do not take into account all of the variables involved in desegregation. It is suggested that clearly focused studies (which examine racial interaction at school sites, within classrooms, or between individual teachers and students) provide more significant data about desegregation. Such data, it is held, will help educators to develop new ways of addressing the educational needs of minority and economically disadvantaged students, particularly in such areas as discipline policy, the hiring of minority staff members, and inservice training for teachers and administrators. Bibliographies on academic performance and adjustment in desegregated schools and on general issues in school desegregation are appended to this paper. (EB)

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Desegregation/Integration: Help or Hindrance in Overcoming Black School Failure

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and

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Introduction

School desegregation as a means by which to overcome the failure of the American education system to educate Black children continues to be one of the most controversial issues faced by the public education system. Busing, assignment of students and faculty, textbook revision, curriculum revision, community involvement, and affirmative action are but a sample of the many issues and questions typically faced by educators where desegregation has been implemented. These problems have not and cannot be solved by instituting simple or hastily developed remedies. Conflicting and often contradictory philosophical positions lead to a multiciplicity of interpretations and practices. When segregated education was deemed unconstitutional in the 1954 Brown decision, it was implied, it not assumed, that Black students who were attending segregated schools would be the basic benefactors of the integrated educational experience. This belief lead to the development of strong resistance, on the part of White parents to having their children attend schools in Black or minority communities.

The failure on the part of the majority group in the society to perceive the value of an integrated experience for all children contributed to the belief that integration might lead to a lowered academic performance for non-minority students. The belief that Blacks would be the basic benefactors of a desegregated experience coupled with the belief that the experience would be harmful to Whites became an additional problem for supporters of desegregation to cope with. The above beliefs have lead to one of the most limiting conditions associated with desegregation. Desegregation became the Black students' burden. It resulted in what is known as "one-way busing," where Black students traveled to White communities with very few White students being transported to the Black community to attend school.

There is little doubt that racism has played a significant role in the development of these events, but I will leave that discussion for another forum. I do believe that the role the social scientist has played in the desegregation of public education cannot be overlooked.

Let us examine what kinds of information and guidance the scientific community has contributed to desegregation efforts.

Research

A lack of accurate information and inconclusive research characterize the statements with which a rapidly expanding coterie of analysts, judges, federal officials, and social scientists sum up the current state of the school desegregation movement. (U.S.O.C.R., 1976; Orfield, 1975; Weinberg, 1977; Rist, 1975; Monti, 1977; St. John, 1975; Brophy and Good, 1974.) Reviews of research according to Crain (1976) have failed to address the urgent issues. Instead of asking--as they have so frequently asked--whether some desegregation is better than none (an irrelevant question, because desegregation is Constitutionally required and irrevocable public policy) the questions should be "concerned with determining how desegregation should be done" (p. 337). Further, Crain adds, research has always asked the question in the wrong way--namely, in terms of short-run achievement tests rather than long-run effects on students or the impact of desegregation on the whole community.

Nancy St. John's review (1975) of over 100 studies of the effects of school desegregation on children, and Meyer Weinberg's series of reviews of research (1968, 1970, 1975) have provided numerous writers with studies to analyze, but which, according to one such analyst, report conflicting findings on many critical questions practitioners need answered in order to avoid the difficulties and mistakes of past desegregation efforts (Arnez, 1978). By far the major criticisms of research on desegregation center on (1) the large number that are based on achievement measures, usually on black achievement only; and (2) studies extended only over a one-year period, usually the first year of desegregation (Crain, 1976). He adds:

> I am optimistic that social science can make a useful contribution in telling federal and local officials how to handle desegregation most effectively. Research can tell us a lot about how to draw a

> desegregation plan, how to cope with public opinion, how to prepare school staff for desegregation and how to modify the curriculum to make desegregation succeed. In this there are no great methodological problems. Competent case studies of desegregating districts are sufficient for much of this (Crain, p. 349).

Arnez, reviewing broadly the effort to desegregate, sees blacks as reactors to desegregation policies and procedures rather than full and equal participants in their development. As a result blacks have been harmed in many ways, but especially in (1) the disproportionate number of suspensions, expulsions, and pushouts due to disciplinary policies and procedures; (2) the disproportionate number of blacks relegated to special education classes and low tracks; and (3) dismissal and demotion of black educators. She concludes that "a new model must be designed, one concerned about education, equality, and equity" (p. 67).

Rist (1976) finds little assistance forthcoming from the research literature on methods for modifying and transforming school practices so as to minimize as much as possible the distresses and hazards of integration. He finds the most promising avenues of investigation to be: (1) teacher expectations in the integrated classroom, (2) producing equal status behavior in students, and (3) classroom instructional processes.

Stephan (1978) has reviewed desegregation from a broad perspective, in order to ascertain the accuracy of social scientists' predictions at the Supreme Court hearings in Brown v. Board of Education. They were incorrect in their expectation, he says, that "desegregation would reduce the prejudice of whites toward blacks, and they were only partially correct in their assumption that segregated blacks would have lower self-esteem than segregated whites" (p. 217).

Like other reviewers cited here, Stephan seeks new apporaches to investigating the teaching/learning process in multicultural classrooms. He finds it likely

that studies to date have been confounded by such variables as race of teachers, race of students, and social class, and that these variables are not adequately considered in the design of most studies, yet they evidently account for the disparate learning outcomes in multicultural classrooms.

The Proper Locus for Research

Past research has tended to focus on effects on large groups and numerically manipulated data, when it more appropriately should center upon what transpires in the individual classroom (Smith and Dziuban, 1977). These two school desegregation consultants at Miami and Orlando, Florida, respectively, propose that effective data collection procedures be implemented at the building and classroom level rather than in larger administrative units. They see a real communication gap between those who have, in the past, conducted desegregation research and those concerned with either the court remediation decision or the building principal who must meet for the first time a desegregated student body. Their comment is:

> Researchers [must] be involved with the people they are analyzing. By now it should be obvious that desegregation will not be accomplished in a computer. Although all legal mandates may have been met, a school can be as segregated as it was originally. We propose a method which derives its validity from the clientele it purports to serve (p. 55).

Brophy and Good (1974) are also strong advocates of shifting the research from groups to individuals, although they acknowledge that influence of different teachers varies in terms of general style, and that different classrooms present differing psychological environments. Because of the current emphasis on mastery learning, individualized instruction, learning centers, and modular instruction, these researchers see teacher behavior being more and more frequently directed toward individual students and subgroups of students rather than the entire class. Therefore, Brophy and Good strongly recommend more studies of individual classroom styles. Differences in teachers' interaction patterns with different

students will help interpret the psychological and academic impact that results in early dropouts, truancy, misbehavior, and other kinds of student failure and frustration. They add that their review of available research convinces them that the complexities of classroom life can be profitably investigated only in real-world settings.

> We also hope to see more research in which the investigator works cooperatively with the teacher, either by observing him naturalistically and then discussing classroom events with him, or by systematically trying out techniques and treatments for students and then evaluating their relative success (p. 14).

Their own studies confirm the strong effect of expectation on behavioral outcomes and the need to examine teachers' styles and strategies with individual students. More case studies and more observational studies employing coding systems would be useful. They report:

> The rich descriptive detail and anecdotal incidents generated in such research provide deeper insights into the teacher expectation phenomena than more quantitative studies using coding systems can provide (p. 128).

Orfield (1975) likewise focuses his concerns on classroom behavior and instructional leadership as the proper place for needed research. He says:

> What goes on in the classroom and the nature of educational leadership of the school are centrally important both to the success of desegregation and to the quality of education offered to all children in the system. Desegregation plans should take into account the educational changes necessary to make desegregation work (p. 315).

Orfield, like the others quoted above, finds a paucity of systematic, carefully controlled research within desegregated schools.

Teacher Expectations Influence the Teaching/Learning Process

The heartbeat of the teaching/learning process is the exchange of messages, verbal and nonverbal, between the teacher and the student. Research into the prejudicial effects of teachers' stereotypic, class-conscious, and race-

discriminatory predispositions has proven most revealing (Bloom, 1978; Hillman and Davenport, 1977; Cornbleth and Korth, 1977; Rist, 1976; and Byalick and Bersoff, 1974). Physical attractiveness, race, socioeconomic status, I.Q., sex, personal habits, mannerisms, and dress have been shown to be variables for setting up differential expectations by teachers, and different behavioral results among learners. For example, a black student's volunteering a response has a greater impact on the teacher's perception of that student than does answering when called upon; for white students the reverse is true (Cornbleth and Korth, 1977). According to Rubovits and Maehr (1973), white teachers give less attention to blacks, ignore blacks more, praise them less, and criticize them more.

Later studies, wherein both white and black teachers were observed, found different patterns of teacher behavior (Gay, 1975; Byalick and Bersoff, 1974; and Hillman and Davenport, 1977). One study reports that it makes little difference whether teachers are black or white; they expect the quality of white students' classroom participation to be better than black students' (Gay, 1975). Other aspects of these three studies are somewhat contradictory, and it is clear that additional teacher-student interaction research is needed.

In the Detroit desegregation effort, observers coded 161 black and 145 white teachers' interactions between themselves and their students (Hillman and Davenport, 1977). The researchers used a modified version of the Brophy-Good Interaction Coding System to record teacher questioning patterns, feedback methods, reinforcement and criticism patterns, and indices of pupil behavior and misbehavior. Findings included these: black students received a significantly greater number of product questions than did white students (requests for short answers where no reasoning or analytical skill was required); black students gave no response to a greater number of questions;

they received more criticism for their behavior; they had more self-initiated questions or comments, encountered nonacceptance of their questions more frequently, and received more teacher feedback to a question or response.

This evidence suggests that black students in an integrated setting are the objects of considerable attention, but that little of that attention is conducive of a sense of belonging or encourages academic achievement.

Framework for Instruction

Brophy and Good (1974) cite several research studies and make numerous recommendations regarding the importance of the instructional framework. Seating location, grouping practices, how and to what extent teachers talk informally with and get to know students personally, students' internality/externality orientation, and learning style preferences are all elements which have significant bearing on learning outcomes.

The different kind of reward contingencies teachers provide is reported by Byalick and Bersoff (1974) to be another variable which greatly influences student behavior. They cite evidence that many children, particularly those of low socioeconomic status, perform better when given material rewards in contrast to abstract awards typically offered by teachers (p. 476).

Equal Status Experience

The problem of "equal status experience" is a concern to many analysts of the desegregated/integrated classroom (Cohen, 1975; Rist, 1976; Weinberg, 1970). Wey and Corey (1959) reported on desegregation problems and progress in 70 school districts. White teachers were found to have difficulties identifying and learning the names of the black pupils but they usually knew names of new white pupils within a week. Other researchers (Bindman, 1965; Cohen, 1975; Maehr, 1974; Hawley and Rist, 1975; Orfield, 1975; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) identify the social and psychological atmosphere of the classroom as a particularly crucial ingredient in successful integration. Some research findings include:

1. Achievement is closely correlated with status and the inability of many minority students to match white achievement greatly diminishes their self-regard and that of their classmates. This correlation is much greater and problems of lowered self-esteem and loss of social confidence are greatly exacerbated where intense classroom competition for grades is present.
2. Teachers' expectations of students' achievement cause them to respond to and treat much differently those of whom high achievement is expected and those of whom it is not. Such expectations are the source of interactive behaviors in the teaching/learning process that cause the expected behavior to occur, when it otherwise might not have occurred.
3. Social class and race as well as academic performance are highly subject to teachers' expectancy patterns. Social class and race are crucial components of what becomes the dominant perceived attribute by which teachers assign unequal status to students.
4. A supportive role by the teacher and carefully targeted instruction can overcome unequal status experience.
5. A broadly-ranging curriculum, with a variety of materials, media, and instructional objectives from which students and teachers develop individualized learning contracts based on the student's level of ability and interests will produce far greater equal status interactions than a narrow, conventional curriculum.
6. Where interracial teams are present and a school is carefully balanced racially, including co-directorships, "equal status behavior" is modeled to all.

7. Teachers can be helped to identify their race and sex biases in classroom organization, language, activities, and interactions.
8. Teachers can be helped to construct activities and curriculum units which counteract race and sex bias in the classroom.
9. District staff members can increase their ability to locate and incorporate culturally accurate instructional materials about minority-group cultures and women in America.

To summarize at midpoint, the meandering progress of research in the field of desegregation indicates that we are only beginning to learn how to design studies that can yield valuable, generalizable conclusions. The preponderance of evidence suggests that quantitative, panoramic studies cannot adequately take into account a multiplicity of variables. Rather, closely focused, qualitative studies which examine racial interaction at school sites, within classrooms, or between individual teachers and students provide significant data about positive, effective teaching strategies. Amid the political turbulence and logistical problems surrounding the desegregation process it is easy to overlook the fact that the quality of the classroom experience for teachers and their minority as well as majority students is the crucial test of desegregation as an educational reform within a community as a whole.

From Desegregation to Integration--An Unprecedented Opportunity

When a school district implements a desegregation plan, even in a relatively supportive atmosphere, many needs become apparent--needs that can best be met by district personnel working cooperatively with students, parents, the community, and organizations funded to assist the desegregation process. Problems such as a disproportionate number of disciplinary actions involving minority students, insufficient minority staff members, and inadequate inservice training for teachers and administrators are important concerns that a district must address. Let us explore these concerns from a minority perspective.

The disproportionate number of minority students receiving disciplinary actions--referrals, suspensions, and expusions--in desegregated schools raises questions about possible discriminatory application of disciplinary procedures. In spite of contentions by school officials that disciplinary policies are fair and equitable, the rate of minority student suspension and expulsion remains higher than that of non-minority students in many districts. In addition, minority students are frequently assigned to teachers who view their behavior as unacceptable and who have negative attitudes regarding the learning capability of minority students. Insensitive, often fearful teachers and administrators may make disciplinary rules tougher as part of school desegregation, and apply such rules to a minority population that is already alienated by the newness of the setting and the lack of opportunity to fully participate in student government and administrative decision-making processes. The effect of such regulations is to limit behavior rather than improve the quality of life in the school.

School staff and members of the community can help ameliorate this situation by developing channels through which the wishes and needs of minority students can be heard and responded to as part of the policy-making process.

The staff of Project STRIDE, based at Far West Laboratory in San Francisco, has for several years worked with school districts in attempting to meet the educational needs of minority students. The STRIDE Student Leadership Program has helped bring staff and students in a number of schools together for the purpose of identifying and resolving the crucial issues they face in their desegregating districts. Another project based at Far West Laboratory, the Special Student Concerns Project, is aimed specifically at examining the causes of disciplinary problems in schools and developing positive intervention strategies involving parents, school staff, and students to help improve educational outcomes for students who might otherwise be waylaid by disciplinary procedures. Both the STRIDE Student Leadership and Special Student Concerns programs operate on the premise that successful desegregation requires the meaningful participation of all those affected by the process.

A positive atmosphere within the classroom is as vital as student participation in the life of the school as a whole. Many people do not fully comprehend the importance of closely matching the percentage of minority staff members to that of the minority student population in a school. We cannot expect minority students to adopt an active or responsible attitude toward their education in a vacuum--in the absence of positive role models. The presence and involvement of minority staff members in the educational process can help students overcome the myth of minority inferiority and foster confident and authentic academic achievement among minority students.

Minority staff members can similarly influence the attitudes of non-minority staff members, and prove an invaluable asset when problems arise. For example, there is ample research evidence to indicate the importance of school principals as trend setters. Indeed, in some instances, the leadership provided by a

minority principal, in addition to minority staff members, can make a crucial difference in the educational climate at a school.

To those who raise the objections that it is difficult to recruit qualified minority staff to work in desegregating schools, we must respond by citing the experience of districts such as Stockton, Los Angeles, and Phoenix, where the resources of the community as a whole have made possible the recruitment and training of staff from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds to work in schools affected by desegregation.

"Training" is a key word. Many teaching professionals assume that a teacher's training is largely completed upon receipt of a degree. Recent research, some of it conducted at Far West Laboratory, indicates that educators, regardless of academic background or ethnicity, require specialized training to work effectively in a desegregated setting. Many competent teachers face for the first time in mid-career classes composed of students from a variety of economic and cultural environments. These teachers are often overwhelmed by the unfamiliar assumptions and behavior of their new students, and lack the skills necessary to implement educational strategies appropriate to their students' needs. This is not to say that minority students are more difficult to educate than white students; rather, that both teachers and students in desegregated classrooms are coping with a changed environment in which cultural differences pose unique challenges that, nevertheless, can be met. Failure to adequately prepare teachers to communicate effectively with all of their students is merely to perpetuate the alienation of significant segments of our society. The benefits of inservice and preservice training targeted to desegregation are improved educational opportunity for all students

through enriched interpersonal contacts and the enlargement of cultural access for students and teachers alike.

Desegregation--the mixing of bodies--does not guarantee equality of educational opportunity. Clearly, experience with desegregation alone has shown little, if any, educational benefit for anyone involved. But if desegregation efforts include equitable and improved student disciplinary procedures, minority staffing that reflects the ethnicity of the students affected, and appropriate staff inservice training, then we begin to integrate our schools, improving educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

Thus, it is incumbent upon educators to seek new ways of addressing the educational needs of minority and economically disadvantaged students. In a society such as ours, educational opportunity entails not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but the encouragement of personal development in individuals and groups as a whole. The school desegregation process affords our communities an unprecedented opportunity to draw upon the achievements and potentials of a variety of cultural traditions to the end of improving the quality of life for all of us in this generation and for generations to come.

Conclusion

After two decades of agonizing rhetoric, controversy, research and debate we still do not know what, if any, Black student achievement can be attributed to the desegregated educational experience. It is equally unclear whether that experience has hindered the development of academic achievement of Black students. Some research can be cited on both sides.

It seems to me that the more basic questions for researchers might be: What should we expect to happen to children who are educated in a desegregated school setting? Should we look to that experience for major academic outcomes? Should we expect that experience to provide a more uniform real-life socialization experience?

There are several issues I think we must understand about research. First, the question asked usually dictates the kind of assertions that can be made about results. Second, research results are interpreted by people bringing into play the significant differences in background and bias variations found in all of us, and third, and perhaps the most important, we must be very careful about mistargeting research findings. Expectations and desired impact must be realistic if practices drawn from research are to be effective and worthwhile.

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